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SUBJECT: Mozambique: Socio-Political Digest

[¶1.](#) (U) This is a summary of significant socio-political developments in Mozambique over the past two months. We provide it as a supplement to our other reporting.

- Developments re March 22 Explosion at Munitions Depot
- PDD District Leader Defects to Frelimo
- Police accused of executing three citizens
- National Election Commission Members Selected

Developments re March 22 Explosion at Munitions Depot

[¶2.](#) (U) The Commission of Inquiry set up by Mozambican President Armando Guebuza reported back on April 11 that the March 22 explosions at the military arsenal in a Maputo suburb were caused by a combination of factors, including the obsolescence of the material stored in the arsenal, poor storage conditions (exposure to the elements - sun, rain, heat and cold), and human error. The Commission found no evidence to suggest that the explosions were caused by sabotage or by attempts to extract mercury from the munitions stored in the arsenal.

[¶3.](#) (U) The Commission discovered that soldiers at the depot lacked manuals and therefore did not know the useful life of the munitions. Inspections consisted of simply looking at the boxes containing munitions (or at the munitions not in boxes). The soldiers carrying out this task had no technical support, and no attempt was made to verify the contents of the boxes nor check on the state of their contents. The report stated that the munitions were stored in a warehouse that had no roof.

[¶4.](#) (U) Mozambican Defense Minister Tobias Dai, speaking to reporters, said it would cost about 600 million meticaïs (USD 24 million) to build new storage facilities at sites away from major cities. (Note - Munitions also are stored in suburbs in several other Mozambican cities. End note.) Dai claimed the government was already working to raise funds.

15. (U) During April, the government released "final figures" on casualties and damage from the explosions. According to its tally, the death toll was 104 people killed. Some 515 others were injured and sought medical assistance, and 80 of these lost limbs. Approximately 4,500 houses were damaged or destroyed.

PDD District Leader Defects to Frelimo

16. (U) Mozambique's third largest political party, PDD (Party for Peace Democracy and Development), suffered a serious blow in April with the defection of the head of its political commission in Sofala, Conceicao Frechaut, to the ruling Frelimo Party.

17. (U) She had once been a Frelimo member, switched her loyalty to the PDD, becoming a member of the PDD National Political Commission, but has now returned to Frelimo, a party she referred to as "my father."

Police accused of executing three citizens

18. (U) The press devoted significant coverage to an alleged extra-judicial execution in early April of three people by the police. According to accounts in the media, police using a vehicle belonging to the Criminal Investigation Police (PIC) took three citizens to a suburban Maputo football field and shot them. Mozambique's Human Rights League, an NGO, denounced the killings as

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executions and urged an immediate investigation.

As a result, both the police and the Attorney-General's office launched formal inquiries. The three apparently were ordinary citizens without any criminal record. The police concluded that the victims were killed trying to escape. The Attorney General's office stated that the victims were shot in the back of the head at point blank range, and gave the names of the three police officers involved. The three accused policemen are in jail awaiting trial. Family members protested outside the jail in early June, saying the policemen were only following orders from higher ups.

National Elections Commission Members Selected

19. (U) Mozambique's National Elections Commission (CNE) on June 8 announced the names of the successful candidates for the eight CNE places reserved for representatives of civil society organizations. Earlier, in May, the first five members of the Commission were chosen -- three picked by the ruling FRELIMO Party and two by the main opposition party, RENAMO. The 13-member Commission will oversee the upcoming provincial, national and municipal elections.

110. (U) The eight civil society members were chosen by a majority of the five political party members (in effect, by FRELIMO) from among 62 candidates submitted by 22 civil society bodies. Only one civil society organization, the Electoral Observatory, brought together a large number of civil society bodies in an attempt to draw up an agreed slate for the CNE. Its initiative was highly public, and transparent, involving the formation of a jury, meetings with

all the provincial NGO forums, and a final phase of private and public interviews of the candidates who made it onto the Observatory's short list. Only two of the candidates nominated by the Observatory were selected.

¶11. (SBU) Comment: The selection of candidates who had not been subjected to a transparent process, presumably at the direction of Frelimo, is a negative sign for the integrity of the public elections process. Although several well known journalists and a respected human rights activist were nominated, those chosen are relatively unknown and inexperienced.

DUDLEY